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ABSTRACT

This document consists of 11 short articles about the development of the Associate of Science degree program for speech-language pathology assistants (SLPAs) at Indiana State University. The three sections address the program's background, course planning, and program implementation, respectively. Individual articles are: (1) "Top 10 List of Things Learned while Developing an SLPA Program (Georgia Hambrecht and Mark Stimley); (2) "Important ASHA History Related to Speech-Language Pathology Assistants: A Timeline for Critical Events" (Mark Stimley); (3) "Speech-Language Pathology Assistants" (Mark Stimley and Jennifer Scherb); (4) "Timeline of Events at Indiana State University Related to the Development and Implementation of Its Associate of Science Degree Program for Speech-Language Pathology Assistants" (Mark Stimley); (5) "Module Preparation" (Georgia Hambrecht); (6) "SLPA On-Campus Clinical Practicum and Lab Experience" (Amanda Solesky and Roberta Wilson); (7) "Advertising and Recruiting Processes" (Karen Meeks); (8) "Advertisement in the SLPA Program" (Amanda Solesky); (9) "Transition of the SLPA into the SLP Caseload" (Amanda Solesky and Dawnda Nichols); (10) "Student Perspectives on the SLPA Program" (Kathryn D. Bayer and others); and (11) "On the Horizon" (Georgia Hambrecht and Mark Stimley). (Some chapters contain references.) (DB)

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Creating a Speech-Language Pathology Assistant Program

Edited by Georgia Hambrecht and Mark Stimley

ED 474 662

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Creating a Speech-Language Pathology Assistant Program

Edited by Georgia Hambrecht and Mark Stimley

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Preface

This monograph represents a milestone in the development of the Associate of Science Degree Program for Speech-Language Pathology Assistants (SLPAs) at Indiana State University. It represents the end of a period in the partial histories of a wide variety of people (students, instructors, professors, speech-language pathologists, and speech-language pathology assistants) who worked together in unique ways to create a speech-language pathology assistant program.

This monograph is comprised of a number of short articles that represent important aspects and insight associated with the development of the SLPA program at Indiana State University. The editors believe that the information contained in this monograph may be of value to those who are considering developing or have developed SLPA programs. It may also provide knowledge to satisfy those curious about the training program, SLPAs, or the program development process.

In organizing and selecting items for this monograph, our primary interest was to present information in an orderly manner that reflects the development of this (or any typical) program. Within the monograph, Section I provides information about background to the development of our program at Indiana State University. We start out by sharing with the reader a list of things that we learned along the way (that we wished we had known before we started). We also provide timeline information regarding the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association's involvement with paraprofessional issues. We provide and "information sheet" for those unfamiliar with the roles and responsibilities and training requirements of SLPAs, and we describe the timeline of events at Indiana State University from when we first became interested in establishing a program, until the time we matriculated our first graduates.

Section II describes the development of the plan of study for SLPAs. Information is provided about how multiple training modules were developed and how they were used in academic courses, practica, and lab experiences to develop a compact, intense, quality educational experience for our SLPA students.

Section III highlights critical practical information about some of the basic mechanics associated with starting an SLPA program. It describes the advertisement, recruitment, and advisement procedures that we used to spread the word about this new program and to attract and to retain students. Section III also describes the model that we used when helping SLP supervisors determine how to integrate SLPAs into their caseload management plan. It also contains a view from the student perspective.

The very last article in this monograph deals with the future. When we wrote this we attempted to describe at least one of the possible sets of futures that our program and SLPAs were likely to experience. We hope that when the reader reaches the end of this monograph they will be as positive as we are about the future of SLPAs. What the exact future will be we do not know but as always we are

traveling hopefully. We choose not to worry about getting to the next or even final milestone, but we are immensely curious about what is over the next hill and around the next corner.

We wish to acknowledge and thank all of the following people for their participation in this project. Together, we have created a valuable program.

Special recognition is given to the Division of Special Education at the Indiana Department of Education. The Director of this Division, Robert Marra, needs to be singled out for his vision and willingness to support and fund a speech-language pathology assistant program to help prepare a different kind of speech-therapy service provider for those in the State of Indiana who need speech and language services.

Special thanks to Bill Littlejohn and the staff of the Blumberg Center for Interdisciplinary Studies in Special Education. We thank them for assisting us with the initiation of this project and supporting us in a variety of ways during this four-year period.

Recognition also needs to be given to the three Dean's of the School of Education who served at various times during the developmental phase of this SLPA project. Dean Richard Antonak, Interim Dean Rebecca Libler, and current Dean C. Jack Maynard have provided continuous support throughout their tenures. We value their steadfast support as well as the assistance of Assistant Dean Robert Williams and the Office of Educational Research and Evaluation.

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And, of course...

All of our current students in the SLPA program at Indiana State University.

Section I

Background to the SLPA Program at Indiana State University

There were many lessons learned in the four years of involvement in the SLPA program. Some were learned easily, while others required or caused "blood, sweat, and tears." It was impossible to arrange these lessons in order of importance, so instead the list is arranged in a chronological order from early learnings to later learnings. We offer these 10 at the beginning of the monograph in part to help acclimate the reader to our point of view and in part to provide a brief accounting of the undertakings completed.

Top 10 List of Things Learned While Developing an SLPA Program

By Georgia Hambrecht & Mark Stimley

1. Seek grant funding.

The work involved in proposing, designing, and beginning a new program is considerable. In addition to this work, the effort that is needed to meet with school, university, and state committees to gain program approval is immense. Funding is available for such endeavors at the school, state, and federal levels. We were fortunate to receive state funding for four years - a planning year and three start-up years. The funding allowed for buy-out of university staff, hiring of additional staff and student workers, purchasing of equipment and materials, awarding of scholarships, and so much more.

2. Develop a team: Hire skilled staff and involve community/state stakeholders.

The program is only as good as the people involved in it. Our program benefited from the inclusion of staff who had worked in the school and hospital settings. We had support staff who had a high level of computer expertise which greatly facilitated our ability to offer portions of the program on distance education as well as present a positive image to our publics. In the planning year we had a community advisory group that helped shape content and program design. In year two, many of these individuals provided a portion of the class module writing expertise. In year four, they stepped forward to serve as supervisors or directors of externship placement facility sites.

3. Pilot new procedures.

Much of our piloting revolved around the inclusion of SLPAs in training into our university operated speech-language clinic. We employed a set of undergraduate majors to act as pseudo-SLPAs while we systematically explored clinical models, developed new manuals, and worked out the logistics of the new clinical experiences.

4. Design a program you can live with.

We attempted to build a program that would be cost efficient, take advantage of those things our host program was already strong in, and remain well within the bounds of ethical practice. We made every attempt to follow ASHA's recommendations. We found it necessary to design practicum experiences for a high number of credit hours (5 hours each) to better support the cost of this activity.

5. Allow sufficient time (and then some) for moving through the process.

Before becoming involved in the development of a new program we were naive in our estimate of time needed to gain approval of the many committees within and outside of the university setting. These committees often had limited meeting times and agendas that were extremely full.

6. Use multiple forms of advertising/recruiting of students.

We were fortunate in having funds to employ an advertising agency to help produce eye-catching and informative recruitment materials. The techniques that seemed to be most beneficial in student recruitment were articles in the local newspaper, poster mailings to high school counselors that included a pull-off-send-in postcard identifying interest, and ads placed in the largest cities near the university.

7. Piggy-back on structures and materials already available.

There were classes already in the curriculum that could provide some of the information and experiences needed for students in the new program. Forms, manuals, and advisement sheets for the SLP program were modified for the newly developed program. We made an effort not to "reinvent the wheel" when limited changes were all that was needed.

8. Develop new structures and materials to meet your needs.

After taking advantage of structures and materials that were already in place because of our bachelors degree program, there were new needs that required innovative ideas. Several courses and clinics were designed specifically for SLPAs. We developed special content modules, web-based classes, externship placement materials, and learning objective based clinical labs (these unique structures and material are described in other portions of this monograph).

9. Communicate with others who are interested.

We found our skills, knowledge, and dispositions that we identified for our SLPA student influenced by our interactions with others. We talked and listened to more people who influenced our thinking in person, on the SLPA list serve, at telecasts, at various ASHA and state association conventions, and after lectures.

10. Self-evaluate and modify.

Like all programs, systematic evaluation and tweaking of details is a part of the process of improvement. Revision of manuals, examination of methods of course delivery, and identification of qualified personnel all led to significant changes in our program.

When developing a new program for speech-language pathology assistants (SLPAs), it is critical to realize that these paraprofessionals will be working with speech-language pathologists. The American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (a major professional organization for speech-language pathologists) has been involved in helping to develop the need for and define the role of SLPAs for many years. It is helpful to persons developing an SLPA training program to realize that ASHA has been involved in setting the guidelines for the use of support personnel in speech-language pathology for over 35 years. Before and during the time that we were developing our program, ASHA developed, published, and revised cardinal documents that we used to help design our program. The following is a very concise look at ASHA policy history that the reader may find helpful.

Important ASHA History Related to Speech-Language Pathology Assistants: A Timeline of Critical Events

By Mark Stimley

1967 ASHA forms the Committee on Supportive Personnel to study the practice of using support personnel in speech-language pathology and audiology.

1970 ASHA publishes its first set of guidelines describing professional responsibilities, tasks, training, and supervision of support personnel.

In 1970, a high school degree was needed, on-the-job training was required, and a minimum of 1 in 10 sessions needed to be directly supervised by the SLP.

1981 ASHA revises its guidelines on the use of support personnel.

1988 ASHA's Committee on Supportive Personnel issues a report regarding the employment and use of supportive personnel with underserved populations.

1992 An ASHA task force on support personnel issues a technical report regarding issues and impact of support personnel on the professions of speech-language pathology and audiology.

1995 ASHA publishes a policy statement regarding the training, credentialing, use, and supervision of support personnel in speech-language pathology.

1996 ASHA publishes guidelines for the training, credentialing, use, and supervision of support personnel in speech-language pathology. These replace the 1986 guidelines.

In 1996, a two-year degree was needed, practicum experiences during training were required, and between 20 and 30 % of all remediation needed to be directly supervised. Restrictions were also given further limiting the scope of involvement of SLPAs in client management.

2000 ASHA's Council on Professional Standards in Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology publishes information about background and criteria for registration of speech-language pathology assistants.

ASHA's Council on Professional Standards in Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology publishes criteria for approval of associate degree technical training programs for speech-language pathology assistants.

2001 ASHA's Council on Professional Standards in Speech-Language Pathology revises criteria for approval of associate degree technical training programs for speech-language pathology assistants.

2002 ASHA's Working Group on Supervision of Speech-Language Pathology Assistants issues an official report on the knowledge and skills needed by supervisors of SLPAs.

References

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American Speech-Language-Hearing Association. (2002). Knowledge and skills for supervisors of speech-language pathology assistants. *Asha* (Suppl. 22), 113-118.

Before you design a program to train speech-language pathology assistants you need to have a very clear idea of what you believe SLPAs are and what they should be able to do after they receive training. In an attempt to clarify this for ourselves and for persons who were thinking about becoming SLPAs, we produced two general information documents in which we described SLPAs, their responsibilities, their training, and the objectives of the program that we were designing. The following is a hybrid of these two documents describing what we at Indiana State University believed prospective SLPAs needed to know before entering the program.

Speech-Language Pathology Assistants

By Mark Stimley & Jennifer Scherb

What is a speech-language pathology assistant?

A speech-language pathology assistant (SLPA) is a support person who helps a certified/licensed speech-language pathologist (SLP) carry out the SLP's professional responsibilities. SLPAs are different than many other types of support personnel in that they are trained to carry out specific therapy related tasks that are prescribed and directed by their supervising speech-language pathologists. At the present time, the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association specifies that SLPAs training must be completed within academic programs at colleges and universities. Terminology that is used to refer to SLPAs differs depending on where the SLPAs work. In some states and in some work settings, SLPAs are called speech-language therapy aides, communication aides, speech therapy paraprofessionals, or speech therapy service extenders.

Why would someone want to be a speech-language pathology assistant?

Being a speech-language pathology assistant allows one to work closely with others on a speech-language therapy team in a wide variety of work settings. SLPAs work with the therapy team to help people with communication disorders improve their ability to speak to, listen to, and interact with others. Projections indicate that there is a high demand for qualified SLPAs and that this demand is accompanied by opportunities for good jobs and salaries. Another reason someone might want to become an SLPA is the amount of time it takes to complete training. Within most training programs, it takes only two years to complete the courses and on-the-job work experiences that qualifies one to become an SLPA. By comparison, SLPs often take up to six years of course work and practicum experience before they are qualified to work as speech-language pathologists.

Where do speech-language pathology assistants work?

Speech-language pathology assistants may work in a variety of settings. These settings include work in schools, hospitals, rehabilitation centers, or private practices. An increasing need for SLPAs is partially based on the increasing need for the provision of cost effective therapy services in schools, hospitals, and other rehabilitative settings.

What types of responsibilities do speech-language pathology assistants have?

Speech-language pathology assistants may conduct speech-language screenings, provide direct treatment assistance, follow documented treatment plans, and document client progress. SLPAs can also assist the speech-language pathologist during assessment and informal documentation. They may prepare therapy materials, carry out clerical activities, schedule activities, and prepare charts, records, and graphs related to speech-language therapy services that they provide. SLPAs may check and maintain therapy equipment and are also allowed to participate in research projects, in-service training, and public relations programs.

What skills and attributes are required to be a speech-language pathology assistant?

* Interest in working with people
* Punctuality and dependability
* Good oral and written communication skills
* Flexibility in solving problems
* Good physical and emotional health
* Cooperation with team members

What type of education is required to become a speech-language pathology assistant?

ASHA recommends that speech-language pathology assistants obtain an associate's degree. Requirements to become an SLPA will differ by state, so persons interested in pursuing this career should check with their state of intended employment.

Within Indiana, an Associate of Science Degree for Speech-Language Pathology Assistants is offered by the Department of Communication Disorders and Special Education at Indiana State University. The 63-credit-hour major is designed to meet the needs of individuals who are interested in focusing on immediate employment as speech-language pathology assistants.

What kind of classes does one take to become a speech-language pathology assistant?

Classes vary based on your college or universities' program. At Indiana State University the proposed curriculum includes 39 credits of course work offered through the Department of Communication Disorders and Special Education and 24 credits of Basic and Liberal Studies course work. The courses listed below are directly related to knowledge, skills, and dispositions that SLPAs will need to have to be successful in their work settings.

CD 119 - Survey of Communication Disabilities
CD 212 - Anatomy and Physiology Basic to Communication
CD 213 - Speech and Language Development
CD 225 - Articulation Disorders and Management
CD 226 - Language Disorders
CD 229 - Clinical Methods and Procedures for the Speech-Language Pathology Assistant
CD 297 - Practicum 1 - Observation
CD 298 - Practicum 2 - Occupational Experience
CD 299 - Practicum 3 - Continued Occupational Experience
CD 323 - Introduction to Rhythm, Voice, and Neurogenic Communication Disorders
CD 324 - Speech and Language for the Hearing Impaired

What are the objectives of the program? What will these classes teach me?

Program objectives are based on recommendations from the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA, 1996). The objectives reflect the knowledge, skills, and dispositions related to the scope of responsibilities of speech-language pathology assistants. Graduates of this program will demonstrate proficiency in the following areas:

1. Interpersonal Skills (communicates with others honestly, accurately, and concisely).

2. Personal Qualities (manages time effectively and demonstrates appropriate professional conduct consistent with ASHA's Code of Ethics).

3. Technical-Assistant Skills (maintains facilitating work environment, selects and prepares therapy materials, maintains therapy-related documentation, and provides general assistance to the speech-language pathologist).

4. Screening Skills (possesses knowledge and ability to administer and score a variety of screening instruments and effectively communicates results to the supervising speech-language pathologist).

5. Treatment Skills (performs therapy tasks as instructed by the supervising speech-language pathologist, manages behavior within treatment sessions, and communicates results).

References

American Speech-Language-Hearing Association. (1996). Guidelines for the training, credentialing, use, and supervision of speech-language pathology assistants. *Asha, 38,* (Suppl. 16), 21-34.

From the time we first thought about creating a training program for speech-language pathology assistants to the time we graduated our first students with the required associate's degree, a lot of things happened. For Indiana State University, this process from conceptualization to actualization took four and one half years, perhaps a little longer than some programs might take, but maybe not.

A lot of things can happen right and wrong over four and one half years and fortunately for us things went relatively smoothly. If not, we would not be writing this monograph and we would not have just this year (2002) graduated our first three speech-language pathology assistants. We still have a few more things to do before we can say we have met all of our goals, but we thought the reader might like to see some of the hurdles in the road that must be negotiated and be given a sense of how long one program took to negotiate this journey.

Timeline of Events at Indiana State University Related to the Development and Implementation of its Associate of Science Degree Program for Speech-Language Pathology Assistants

By Mark Stimley

Timeline

1997	July	The program developers-sponsors obtained a small internal incentive grant to support all the activities leading up to submission of a grant to the state to support the preparation of the program.
	Fall	Preliminary work associated with grant specifics and program was completed.
1998	Spring	Program developers sought support from department, school, dean, and university to submit grant to state agency (Division of Special Education, Indiana Department of Education) to support development of program at Indiana State University.
	June	The grant was submitted to the Division of Special Education.
	July	We waited to receive confirmation that our grant was approved.
	August	The grant was approved by the Division of Special Education.

		We established accounts at the university to handle funds while we advertised for and recruited grant personnel (two speech-language pathologists, one grant secretary, and four graduate assistants).
	September	A community advisory team composed of speech-language pathologists from local schools and hospitals was established to provide input from practicing professionals. This advisory team worked together until May 1999.
	Fall	We developed our curriculum based in part on ASHA guidelines (1996) for training of SLPAs and began to process the paperwork needed to gain university approval for the program. We contracted with a public relations firm to help develop a marketing plan and materials for the program. These turned out to be some of the best dollars we ever spent in terms of the amount of work they saved us and the quality of the materials produced.
1999	Spring	The proposal for the development of the new SLPA program was reviewed and approved by the Department of Communication Disorders and Special Education, the School of Education Congress, the Teacher Education Committee, the Dean of the School of Education, and the University's Curriculum Approval Committee.
	Early Spring	Pilot Project #1 involving the use of pseudo-SLPAs (sophomore communication disorder majors) within our clinic was initiated. The pilot project helped determine how to have future paraprofessionals work with graduate student speech-language pathologists within our work setting. Without the guidance of certified supervising speech-language pathologists, graduate SLPs were very inefficient in using the pseudo-SLPAs. What a learning experience for us all.
	Late Spring	Graduate student SLPs and SLPAs were working well together now that supervisors had helped them figure out how to work together.

	Summer	Practicing speech-language pathologists develop teaching modules on selected skill and knowledge areas for speech-language pathology assistants.
	June	The grant for the second year of the project was submitted.
	July	Marketing materials were printed. We crossed our fingers that no significant changes would need to be made.
	August	Grant #2 was approved. We were "go" for at least one more year.
		The department offered an SLPA supervision course to seniors for a first time.
	Early Fall	Program was reviewed and approved by the Executive Committee of the Faculty Senate, the Faculty Senate, and the Provost and the Vice President of Academic Affairs.
	October 22	The Board of Trustees gave final university approval to the program. We now shifted our energies towards gaining approval from the Indiana Commission for Higher Education (ICHE).
	December	The program proposal was sent to ICHE.
2000	January	Pilot Project #2 involving different training techniques related to SLPA competencies was initiated.
	January	The department offered its first ever Internet course to practicing SLPs about supervision of other SLPs, student interns, and SLPAs.
	May 12	ICHE approved the program after it became an Associate of Science degree. Apparently much of the time delay since December was because the Commission wanted this degree to be an Associate of Science degree (not an Associate of Applied Science degree).
	May 15	We celebrated for a day and then got to work recruiting students because, with ICHE approval, we finally had permission to advertise.

	May	Marketing materials were sent to all Indiana high schools, every SLP state association member, and every special education director in Indiana. We needed students for fall.
	June	Grant #3 was submitted.
	Summer	The SLPA program coordinator worked all summer getting ready for students. We finalized details about first semester curriculum, recruited students, and enrolled students. It was almost "show time."
	August	Grant #3 approved
	August	First SLPA students began classes on campus.
	Fall	A new group of seniors took the SLPA supervision course.
2001	January	Second semester of SLPA courses were offered on campus for the first time.
		The SLPA program offered its first Internet course to persons interested in becoming SLPAs.
		Practicing SLPs signed up again to take the supervision class via the Internet.
	June	Grant #4 was submitted.
	August	Grant #4 was approved.
	September	First SLPA students began on-campus practicum. After the pilot projects that were conducted two and three years ago, the experience went very well for SLPAs, graduate student SLPs, and their supervisors.
		A course on speech and language development was offered via the Internet. In addition to SLPA students, a surprising number of students who were not interested in becoming SLPAs took the course for the information.
2002	January	First SLPA students began off-campus practicum. Each student participated in an eight week school experience and an eight-week hospital/nursing care experience.

May	First 3 SLPA students graduated from ISU. The second class of SLPA students are in process.

References

American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (1996). Guidelines for the training, credentialing, use, and supervision of speech-language pathology assistants. *Asha, 38,* (Suppl. 16), 21-34.

Section II
Course Planning Process

The need to solicit input from practicing SLPs in the design of the program was identified very early in our planning process. To this end a community advisory team with representation from school, hospital, and nursing home SLPs and school special education administration was established during the initial planning year. This advisory team helped define curricular needs and program emphasis. At the conclusion of our year involvement with the advisory team, the impact of practitioner input was clearly evident. The use of SLPs within the state as module authors was a logical extension of the community advisory team. Several of the original advisory team went on to become module authors. The paper to follow includes a checklist for final module acceptance and a listing of the modules we adopted. One thing we learned the hard way was the importance of specifying format characteristics of the module information.

Module Preparation

By Georgia Hambrecht

One of the new courses that needed to be developed for the SLPA Program curriculum was a Clinical Methods and Procedures class specifically geared to the assistant's scope of practice. Several facilitating and constraining factors influenced our final solution to this course design challenge.

Facilitating factors included 1) input from a team of community SLPs as to topics that should be addressed, 2) a year of planning time before the class was taught, and 3) a pool of monies from a state grant to help in the program development efforts. Constraining factors included 1) no prepared materials were available that were geared at SLPA methods, 2) a large number of diverse topics that needed to be covered, and 3) a desire to make the materials accessible via the Internet. Our solution was to have practicing SLPs design topic modules that could become the core of a class we supported.

A request for participation was sent via e-mail to all Indiana Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ISHA) members who had an e-mail address listed in the directory. Those that responded were contacted and 15 topic modules were contracted. Topics were assigned based on interests, expertise, and working knowledge of the pre-identified themes. The following checklist for module preparation illustrates the specifications the module writers were asked to address:

Checklist for Module Preparation

Module Topic _____ Module Author _____
Reviewed by _____ Date Reviewed _____

The purpose of this checklist is to provide you with feedback concerning your modules. A check after an item means it is present and appropriate. The comment section that follows each set of items will help clarify our responses.

I. Identifying Information.

- Title of Module ____
- Name ____
- Background Paragraph ____

II. Table of Contents for the packet of materials you are including.

- Table of Contents ____
- Amount of Material ____
- Appropriate for SLPA ____

III. Contents of Packet

A. Five basic learner objectives (e.g., if you were working on AAC you might have a learner objective of "The student will be able to produce a communication board using computer and non-computer graphic generation methods").

- Five Objectives ____
- Form appropriate ____

B. For each learner objective you need to include materials.

- Materials Included ____
  - lecture notes ____
  - copies of readings ____
  - class room activities ____
  - other means to support ____
- Transitions ____
- Reading Lists ____
  - copies included ____
  - appropriate level ____
  - two sources as required ____
  - bibliography of supplemental ____

C. Students learn best by doing and application.

- In-class activities ____
- Out-of-class activities ____

D. Evaluation of learner objective mastery. Describe and provide the tools that should be used to evaluate whether the student has mastered the stated objectives.

- Traditional measures ____
- "Key" included ____
- Alternative evaluation ____

E. You are strongly encouraged to use whatever teaching support materials you believe would facilitate the presentation of this information to students.

- Teaching Support Materials ____
- Description of use ____
- Signed Release(s) ____

The final module products surpassed our expectations in allowing for the provision of a practical yet varied presentation of methods and procedures appropriate to SLPA students. Below is a brief description of the objectives highlighted in the 15 modules. Twelve modules were incorporated into the Clinical Methods and Procedures course while the remaining three were utilized in other related courses. Below are excerpts from the modules that express the authors' goals and objectives at the time the modules were written.

Module 1

The Role of Speech Language Pathology Assistants in Management of Acquired Communication Disorders

By Beverly Brown Farnsworth

According to the learning objectives in this module, students will learn to define aphasia, identify characteristics, associated disorders, and various traditional options used in therapy for the treatment of aphasia. Students will also be able to define, identify characteristics, and name traditional therapy options for apraxia of speech, dysarthria, dementia, and traumatic brain injury (T.B.I.) Finally, the student will become familiar with associated conditions frequently encountered with acquired communication disorders, including dysphagia, tracheostomy, and laryngectomy.

Module 2

Service Delivery Options

By Tracy L. Goff

The first learning objective of this model states that the students will gain an understanding of the characteristics of each of the four primary service delivery models by completing a diagram of each model. Students will demonstrate a knowledge and understanding of the four primary service delivery models by identifying the correct service delivery model via videotape. Students will also learn to identify and implement the essential components of consultation and effective communication within peer groups when given a "situation." The student will be able to implement components of integration by utilizing a schedule/routine or by identifying "'where" integration could occur to meet goals and by identifying "'who" to consult with and/or will implement components of pullout therapy by utilizing items given. According to the last learning objective, the student will identify his or her role as a SLPA by participating in discussions and will complete a responsibility checklist.

Module 3

How Speech-Language Pathology Assistants Can Assist the SLP When They Aren't Doing Therapy

By Brenda Goodier

This module teaches students how an assistant can help an SLP when they are not doing therapy. The student will learn ways that a SLPA may help in documenting progress at an informal level and aid in material preparation or organization. The student will learn the tasks involved in organizing a hearing screening under the direction of an SLP. The student will also learn the clerical duties that an assistant is allowed to complete. (This module was utilized in another related course.)

Module 4

Law, Ethics, and Professionalism

By Jay Goodier

According to the learning objectives, this module covers information on the primary laws that govern special education. It also teaches basic understanding of vocabulary related to special education. Students will learn a basic understanding of the process for enrollment, components of an Individual Education Plan, placement in programs, and due process in special education. This module also covers a basic understanding of ethics in the profession and professionalism.

Module 5

Applied/Practical Phonetics for the SLPA

By Lee Anne Luttrell

This module provides an overview of phonetics that is useful to the SLPA. The student will learn place, manner, and voicing of phonemes. The student will understand how vowels are classified. The student will also be able to identify and use phonetic symbols to transcribe. (This module was utilized in another related course.)

Module 6

Audiology and The Speech-Language Pathology Assistant

By Kristie Brown Lofland

This module states that students will be able to identify basic components of the field of audiology and the audiologist's role. The student will also have a basic understanding of the types, degrees, and causes of hearing loss. Students will be

able to identify the parts of an audiometer and tympanometer and know how to set up, check for function, and maintain the equipment. Students will also be able to conduct an air conduction screening test. Finally, the student will be able to identify the basic component parts of a hearing aid, know how to change the battery, clean the aid, and assess the condition of an earmold.

Module 7

Observation, Data Collection, Documentation for Speech-Language Pathology Assistants

By April W. Newton

Through this module students will understand basic terminology as it relates to observation, data collection, and documentation. Students will be able to discuss subjective and objective observations. Students will also demonstrate an understanding of data collection systems including event based methods, time based methods, and characteristics of a good data system. Students will understand analysis of documentation and be able to describe interobserver reliability. Finally, students will demonstrate that they understand the purpose of data collection and documentation through video samples.

Module 8

How Speech-Language Pathology Assistants Can Help in Providing AAC to Clients

By April W. Newton

This module provides introductory level information for augmentative and alternative communication (AAC). Students will be able to identify, describe, and discuss the strengths/limitations of AAC to spoken communication. Students will also be able to adapt an age appropriate book for a non-verbal individual. Students will be able to identify vocabulary needs for a targeted task. Finally, students will develop a communication board using computer or graphic generated methods.

Module 9

What Speech-Language Pathology Assistants Need to Know About Working With Children With Autism

By Karen Oxendine

The learning objectives in this module state that the student will be able to identify the three basic characteristic areas from the diagnostic criteria which identifies a child with autism. The student will demonstrate knowledge of several techniques that could be used to modify behavior/communication problems with a

child who has autism. The student will also demonstrate knowledge of the definition and history of autism. Finally, the student will identify sensory problems that individuals with autism may possess.

Module 10

Speech-Language Pathology Assistants and Speech, Language and Hearing Screening

By Karen Ross

According to the learning objectives in this module, students will learn knowledge on the fundamentals of a screening versus an evaluation. Students will also be able to accurately score two speech and language screenings during role play situations and from video tapes samples. Students will understand the Functional Independence Measure (FIM) purpose and scoring system. Finally, students will be able to accurately score patients from a video sample using the FIM system.

Module 11

General Terminology and Vocabulary for the SLPA

By Angela K. St. John

Through this module students will learn a basic understanding of speech-language disorders and some prevalent syndromes as they relate to speech-language disorders. The student will be able to define basic speech-language pathology terminology used in the school setting and the hospital setting. The student will also learn basic terminology dealing with equipment and audiology terms that are used in the field. Medical, ethical, and legal terminology is also discussed. (This module was utilized in another related course.)

Module 12

Speech-Language Pathology Assistants in Medical Settings

By Angela Simpson

According to the first learning objective in this module students will gain knowledge of the various medical professionals that contribute to the multi-disciplinary team approach to rehabilitate patients. Students will also learn about prevalent communication disorders that are seen in the medical setting as they relate to the responsibility of the speech-language pathology assistant. This module provides students with the general elements and adaptations of a treatment session to promote functional independence. Students will become familiarized with

documentation issues pertinent to the medical setting and the organization of a patient's medical chart. Students will also become familiar with methods of infection control.

Module 13

Speech-Language Pathology Assistants in the Nursing Home Setting

By Amanda C. Solesky

Through this module the students will be able to perform oral motor stimulation by learning a variety of oral exercises and stimulation techniques. The student will be able to demonstrate knowledge of proper patient positioning for safe eating and at least 10 feeding and swallowing precautions. The student will also learn to perform a routine hearing aid maintenance check. Students will gain knowledge on causes and symptoms of dysphagia. Finally, the student will learn to complete a SOAP note (log entry) from given examples.

Module 14

Positive Behavioral Support Module

By Claire B. Thorsen

According to the learning objectives, students will be able to demonstrate basic knowledge of socially acceptable and unacceptable behaviors by verbally and/or in writing identifying the appropriateness of a set of behaviors. Students will also learn that behaviors are not random, but purposeful, and be able to identify the perceived function of behaviors. Students will be able to identify causes and maintenance factors of exhibited behavior and specify the perceived cause and response for selected behaviors. They will learn to use a specified framework to accurately chart behaviors, their antecedents, consequences, and purposes. Students will also demonstrate the ability to provide information to an initial interview and summarize the information gathered, when provided with an interview format. The student will demonstrate the ability to identify basic behavioral support for all children and be able to read and interpret a behavior plan when provided with a sample.

Module 15

Educational and Medical Interdisciplinary Team

by Claire Thorsen & Lynn Wilson

The first learning objective of this module states that the student will be able to demonstrate an understanding of the purpose of collaborative teams in the educational and medical settings. The student will also be able to demonstrate an understanding of team membership and their roles in the educational and medical settings. The student will understand how collaborative teams function in the educational environment and in different medical environments. The last objective states that the student will understand the roles and responsibilities of the speech-language pathology assistant on medical and collaborative teams.

The integration of the SLPA students into the on-campus clinic was a critical issue that we knew we needed to address from the beginning of the planning phase. The pilot projects completed in year two and three both focused on this aspect of the program. While the team developed, piloted, and revised the components of the practicum experience over the years, Amanda Solesky, who eventually became the SLPA program coordinator, put all the pieces together and taught the SLPA practicum class for the first time. Below is a description of the on-campus experience provided to the first cohort of SLPA students to help them acquire the required competencies. As with all aspects of our program, the clinical practicum and lab experience are periodically updated and revised.

SLPA On-Campus Clinical Practicum And Lab Experience

By Amanda Solesky & Roberta Wilson

During the fall semester of the student's second year in the SLPA program, an on-campus clinical practicum and lab experience was completed. This clinical practicum/lab experience was guided by a set of competencies in which the students were expected to become proficient. The competencies chosen were based on the "Speech- Language Pathology Assistant Suggested Competencies" by ASHA in the article:

> American Speech-Language-Hearing Association. (1996). Guidelines for the training, credentialing, use, and supervision of speech-language pathology assistants. *Asha, 38,* (Suppl. 16), 21-34.

A listing of the competencies required for the associate degree program at Indiana State University is as follows:

Competencies

A. INTERPERSONAL SKILLS (Communicates clearly, accurately, and concisely)

1. Deals effectively with the client, family members, and professionals.

a. Establishes and maintains appropriate relations with the client and family.
b. Takes into proper consideration needs and cultural values of client and family.
c. Demonstrates an appropriate level of self-confidence.

2. Uses appropriate written and oral language.

a. Uses language appropriate for the client's age and education level.

b. Is courteous and respectful at all times, demonstrating appropriate pragmatic skills.

3. Interacts effectively with supervisor.

a. Is receptive to constructive feedback and observations.
b. Requests assistance from supervisor as needed.
c. Actively participates in interaction with supervisor.

B. PERSONAL QUALITIES

1. Is dependable and conscientious.

a. Arrives punctually and is prepared to initiate and complete tasks within appropriate time frame.
b. Evaluates own performance, recognizing strengths and limitations.

2. Demonstrates appropriate conduct.

a. Respects/maintains confidentiality of clients.
b. Maintains personal appearance appropriate for the work setting.
c. Recognizes professional limitations and performs within boundaries of training and job responsibilities, directs client, family, and professionals to supervisor when appropriate.

C. TECHNICAL-ASSISTANT SKILLS

1. Prepares and organizes treatment area in order to obtain optimal performance.

a. Provides for appropriate seating, lighting and noise control.

2. Uses time effectively.

a. Performs assigned tasks with no unnecessary interruptions or delays.
b. Completes assigned tasks within designated time frame/ treatment session.

3. Selects, prepares, and presents materials effectively.

a. Selects and prepares appropriate materials, based on treatment plan, prior to session.
b. Selects motivating, age, and culturally appropriate materials.

4. Maintains documentation.

a. Documents treatment plans and protocols accurately and concisely.
b. Consistently differentiates correct versus incorrect responses.
c. Documents and reports patient/client performance to supervisor.
d. Co-signs documents reviewed and signed by the supervisor.
e. Prepares and maintains patient/client charts, records, and graphs for data.
f. Documentation is timely.

5. Provides assistance to speech-language pathologist.

a. Assists during assessment and informal documentation.
b. Organizes and schedules screenings, evaluations, meetings, and activities as instructed.
c. Assists the supervisor with research projects, in-service training, and public relations programs.

D. SCREENING

1. Demonstrates knowledge and use of screening procedures and screening tools.

a. Completes training of screening procedures.
b. Consistently conducts and documents screening procedures accurately.
c. Consults supervisor if the screening tool or administration may need to be adapted.
d. Provides descriptive behavioral observations that may affect screening results.

E. TREATMENT

1. Performs tasks as outlined and instructed by the supervisor.

a. Accurately and efficiently implements activities using procedures planned by the supervisor.
b. Uses supervisor's constructive feedback to modify interactions and treatment.

2. Demonstrates skills in implementing treatment programs and managing behavior.

a. Maintains on-task behavior.
b. Gives directions that are clear, concise, and appropriate for the client's age and level of understanding.
c. Provides appropriate feedback and reinforcement that are consistent, discriminating, and meaningful.
d. Applies knowledge of behavior modification during client interaction.

3. Demonstrates knowledge of treatment objectives and plans.

a. Demonstrates understanding of the client's disorder and needs.
b. Describes behaviors in a way that demonstrates knowledge of the client's overall level of progress.

Clinical Manual

Prior to starting their clinical practicum, the students met with the program coordinator to review the SLPA Clinic Manual. The manual covered all policies, procedures, and guidelines applicable to the SLPA and the university clinic. The Clinic Manual included the following topics:

Introduction and Roles of Team Members
Clinical Assignments
Documentation examples
Methods of Evaluation
Personal Appearance/Dress Code
Confidentiality
Liability & Criminal History Guidelines
Clinic Policies Regarding Absences, Universal Precautions, and Emergency Procedures
SLPA Competencies, Duties, and Roles
Hour Verification Form

Clinical Practicum

The clinical experience of the student SLPA at the university clinic involved a team of three participants: the Student SLPA, a Senior Clinician (faculty recommended graduate student), and a Faculty Supervisor. This was a team effort in which all three members work closely with one another. The Student SLPA was assigned to a Senior Clinician and two of the Senior Clinician's clinical assignments. The two clinical assignments were typically as follows:

Assignment 1: A group of two clients presenting articulation or language disabilities. Student SLPA assigned a therapy provider role in assisting the Senior Clinician.

Assignment 2: Client presenting a more challenging disorder type (e.g. aphasia, fluency, or voice). Student SLPA assumed a more supportive role in assisting the Senior Clinician.

The Senior Clinician and Faculty Supervisor both directed the Student SLPA's activities using the SLPA Competencies as a guide. For example, the one plan stated:

"Procedure - A chef's hat will be made to reinforce the final /f/. Pictures containing final /f/ will be presented and the client will be asked to repeat them while emphasizing the final sound. A cooking activity where the client can be the "chef" will be used as reinforcement."

"SLPA Objective: Will complete assigned tasks within a designated time frame by making the materials needed for this activity prior to the session."

The Faculty Supervisor met with both the Student SLPA and Senior Clinician individually and was responsible for providing weekly written feedback, as well as, midterm and final evaluations.

Laboratory Experience

A lab component was taken in conjunction with the clinical practicum and focused the SLPA students on assignments designed to prepare them to meet the competencies. During earlier pilot studies it became evident that opportunities to address some of the competencies did not occur readily in each clinic situation. We felt that the students needed more systematic exposure to certain competencies than they would get in the practicum. One solution was to develop lab assignments designed to specifically address the competencies in additional ways. For example, situations did not occur systematically in clinic to give the students experience with critical ethical issues. A lab required the students to choose or develop a scenario and act it out in class. The scenarios chosen would place the students in situations where they were asked to perform duties outside the scope of responsibilities of a SLPA. The students role played exactly how they would respond to such situations and were given feedback on appropriateness of their actions. All of the labs were prepared to further the student's knowledge, skills, and dispositions related to the competencies.

The following is a listing of the titles of the labs that were included in the class:

Ethics Lab
Bulletin Board Lab
Data Collection Lab (Video Supported)
Goal Identification/Behavior Modification Lab (Video Supported)
Therapy Session Preparation Lab
Technology Review Lab
Self Evaluation Lab
Medical Chart Review Lab
Multicultural Needs Lab
Communication Disorder Summary Lab
Screening Lab
Volunteer Lab

Each lab was set up in the same manner and designed to be completed independently by the student outside of class. Labs provided complete written instructions for the assignment, contained needed video or other support materials, and each targeted five competencies.

The labs also included score sheets for consistent grading by the instructor. Scores were assigned according to how well the student demonstrated the competencies the lab was targeting. Scoring rubrics were used by the instructor. These included indicators of what the student should have included or performed for each of the competencies.

The clinical practicum included a one-hour class that met once a week. During class time the students submitted the labs as they were due. If the labs required presentations, the students completed this during the class time. All of the labs and supporting materials were available in a large organized container. Although each lab was assigned a specific due date, the students were free to access the materials whenever and could work ahead on any of the labs.

Summary

The competencies drove our clinical practicum and laboratory experiences. They provided sufficient direction to help insure all students who graduated from the SLPA program were adequately trained. The Clinical Manual was important in providing consistent and easily accessible information related to clinical practices at the university setting. The Clinical Practicum turned out to be one of the most valuable learning experiences for the students. It provided a safe and supportive environment for their first patient contact and it also involved learning to be part of a team. The Laboratory Experience was effective in ensuring systematic exposure to all the competencies. It allowed for the examination of a variety of issues, work settings, and practical applications. All these components were essential to our training program for speech-language pathology assistants.

Section III

Implementing the Program

The initial marketing plan of a new program was something that no one on the team had previously experienced. Once marketing and recruitment materials were developed, we felt we were on more familiar ground but continued to discover new issues we needed to address. The "questions" we faced and our "answers" to these queries are provided below by the grant support person, Karen Meeks, who was our primary link to advertising and recruiting.

Advertising and Recruiting Processes

By Karen Meeks

Like all the other aspects of starting a new program, advertising and recruiting are important and sometimes difficult. Knowing which methods will be best, how to find the right agency, or even who the target audience is can be challenging. Here are some of the questions that we found ourselves asking and the path we took for each.

1. How do you find an advertising agency?

The use of advertising is essential in getting the word out about a new program and finding the right advertising agency can be tricky. This process can take quite a long time and needs to be started early in the planning stage. We began the process by looking in the local yellow pages, picking several agencies, and then calling them to find those who might be interested in assisting us. Remember that having a budget limit may help or hinder the process, depending on the size of your budget. We located two prominent local agencies with good reputations and arranged meetings with both. After several meetings we chose Williams/Randall Marketing as the agency to create our brochures and recruitment packets, develop our advertising plan, and generate a theme or image that would become the basis for all of our material. We ensured that there was a written agreement, that it covered everything that needed to be accomplished, and that it did not exceed the budget.

2. What steps are necessary when choosing the right "image" for the program?

The right advertising theme or image is very important and requires a lot of thought. A good advertising agency will present at least two or three good ideas from which to choose. In our case, the agency presented three different concepts, but one in particular stood out from the others. It was not perfect, yet it was a good idea. We had all the grant members involved in the program meet with the advertising agency and look at all the ideas. This allowed us to have many different points of view and comments about each idea. The important things to remember

are not to discount any idea, and anything can be modified and probably will be several times before the right result is achieved. This theme or image was a work in progress. We modified certain aspects of our theme until it became what we needed.

3. What are the benefits of using new photos for the advertising vs. stock photos?

After the decision of the theme was made, we needed to decide on whether to arrange a photo shoot or use stock photography that could be provided by the advertising agency. Stock photography can be fine and, if cost is an issue, it can be less expensive than arranging a photo shoot. In our case we were able to use the university photographer at a minimal cost and decided that a photo shoot would be in our best interest. Arrangements were made to use graduate students, staff, and actual clients in our photos. We asked these individuals in advance, arranged schedules and rooms, and procured written permission from each person who would be pictured. This enabled us to show scenes specific to the field of speech-language pathology assistants.

4. What type of content should be included in the recruitment packet?

The information that programs need to get to prospective students can be overwhelming. The key is to make each information item simple and then dispense them systematically. The advertising agency can provide ideas about recruitment, but they will need some basic information from the client about the project. We decided that a tri-fold brochure, a few insert sheets, a poster, and a folder would be a good start to our recruitment package. The brochure contained information about speech-language pathology assistants, the reasons why someone would want to choose this profession, and information on why SLPAs are needed. The inserts provided information about what SLPAs can and can not do, about the university program, and about what courses would be taken. The poster provided a good overall view of the program and served as a good visual display for bulletin boards and guidance offices. Later, we added postage paid return cards to the posters. These were placed together in a folder that was mailed out to prospective students who could then call and ask for more information if needed. The theme the we selected "Are you the missing piece needed to solve the communication puzzle?" was used throughout all the recruitment material and provided a continuity that allowed the material to come together as a whole package. We even used this image for the cover of this monograph.

5. What methods of recruitment are the best?

Once the recruitment material was completed, the next step involved deciding where and to whom to have the materials sent. Finding the most receptive target audience can be quite challenging. Because we did not have any information on what would be the best way to recruit, we started with the most obvious. Recruiting

high school students seemed like a good starting point, so we sent out approximately 350 packets to Indiana high school guidance counselors. Packets were then sent to all Special Education Directors in the state of Indiana in hopes that they would pass the information along to their SLPs and so forth. We also targeted SLP state association members and asked for their assistance in forwarding our information to anyone working in the field or anyone who might be interested in the associate's degree as an SLPA. The other methods that worked well for us were updating our department's web page to contain SLPA information, advertising in the local newspaper as well as surrounding cities, and putting an advertisement in the University newspaper to reach local university students who were searching for a new major. Advertising in the newspaper was quite expensive. We found that a human interest article focusing on the program and speech-language pathology assistants brought in more calls and inquiries than any other method of recruitment.

6. E-mail vs. paper recruitment. How do they compare?

E-mail is the communication wave of the future, but its effectiveness in recruitment is somewhat uncertain. Communication by e-mail is a useful way to reach many people in a cost efficient and quick manner, so we used this method to get the word out about our program. Distribution lists were made and e-mails were sent to state SLP association members and special education directors announcing the start up of the SLPA program. The response that we received was positive for the most part, but it seemed that even though e-mail was a quick and inexpensive method, it could also be seen as "annoying" or perceived as "junk mail" and deleted. The posters with return address cards that were developed during our second recruitment cycle became quite a good method of recruitment. These gave the students something to read, images to look at, and an easy way to request more information. All types of communication, e-mail, regular mail, and posters have benefits and should be used together to reach as many sources as possible.

Many questions came to us along this journey through advertising and recruiting. These were only the highlights. If we had had prior dealings with an agency, or previous experience with recruitment efforts, perhaps we would have taken different paths along the way, but we are pleased with where we ended once we arrived.

Amanda Solesky has served as the advisor for the SLPA students entering the program. Below she has captured the preparations essential for providing good advisement. Also included here is the single page advisement sheet for the Associate of Science Degree Program for the Speech-Language Pathology Assistant from Indiana State University. It shows at a glance the course requirements, sequencing of courses, and credit hour required in the program. We placed this summary of the program at the end of the monograph where we can be assured that the reader has the background knowledge to appreciate all that went into making this one page a reality.

Advisement in the Speech-Language Pathology Assistant Program

By Amanda Solesky

Advisement can be a time consuming and challenging experience for both the student and advisor without appropriate knowledge and preparation on the part of the advisor. The following is a listing of preparations to take prior to beginning actual advisement of students:

- Obtain a good understanding of general education requirements and liberal studies requirements applicable to associate degrees.
- Acquire knowledge of procedures for registration and enrollment in written form for students (in order to hand out or fax).
- Prepare lists and phone numbers of persons as contacts who can answer questions or to whom you can direct students.
- Understand what courses are foundational vs. elective (if applicable to your institution).
- Know dates and deadlines for registration and drop/add times.
- Direct students to have a tentative schedule planned prior to meeting with you.
- Know how students can get an application, application fees if any, and class/credit hour fees.
- Know where students can find general information regarding the institution (such as the web site or pages in the student catalog or handbook).
- Know where to find out what classes students have completed and grades earned (such as DARS reports).
- Take advantage of any advisement training that your university, college, or school offers.

The following page is the advisement sheet for the speech-language pathology assistant student. This form is kept in the advisor's file on the student. Basic guidelines regarding general education, liberal studies, and major class requirements are provided. Space is provided to track credit hours completed as well as hours remaining. In our program we also record the semester the student completed the course and the grade received. In this manner all information is collected on one page.

Indiana State University
Speech-Language Pathology Assistant

Name _____

Graduates of this program will develop the knowledge, skills, and dispositions which will prepare them to work with people with communication disorders in a variety settings while working under the supervision of a speech-language pathologist. Individuals who desire a license as a speech-language pathologist must complete the appropriate baccalaureate and master's degree programs. The total associate degree program must consist of a minimum of 63 hours with a cumulative grade point average of 2.50 or higher.

GENERAL EDUCATION (21-27 hours)	Grade/Hrs	Hrs done	Hrs Req	Hrs To do
Basic Studies (9-12 hours)				
If SAT V< 510 [ACT English< 20] take ENG 101, 3 hrs **and** ENG 105, 3 hrs, **or**				
If SAT V ≥ 510 [ACT ENG ≥ 20] take ENG 107, 3 hrs, **or** ENG 108, 3 hrs.	_____	_____	3-6	_____
Quantitative Literacy: MATH 102 - 3 hrs **or** test out		_____	0-3	_____
Information Technology not required for new students 2001. It has been rescinded until 2002.				
COMM 101, Introduction to Speech Communication or COMM 302, Speech for the Teacher - 3 hrs		_____	3	_____
	Basic Studies subtotal	_____	9-12	_____

Liberal Studies (15 hours minimum)
COMPLETE AT LEAST THREE HOURS IN EACH OF THREE LIBERAL STUDIES CORE CATEGORIES
(CHECK THE ❑ IN FRONT OF EACH AREA TO BE COMPLETED)
COURSES MUST BE SELECTED FROM THE "REQUIRED" FOUNDATIONAL COURSES IN EACH AREA

❑ **SMS: Scientific & Math Studies: Foundational lab science course required**				
_____ _____		_____	0-8	_____
❑ **SBS:Social and Behavior Studies: Foundational course required**				
_____ _____		_____	0-6	_____
❑ **LAPS:Literary, Artistic, & Philosophical Studies: Literature and Life course**	_____	_____	0-3	_____
❑ **HS: Historical Studies**	_____	_____	0-3	_____
❑ **MS:USD: Multicultural Studies: U.S. Diversity course**		_____	0-3	_____
❑ **MS:IC: Multicultural Studies: Internat'l Cultures course**	_____	_____	0-3	_____
	Liberal Studies Subtotal	_____	15	_____
	General Education Total	_____	24-27	_____

SPEECH-LANGUAGE PATHOLOGY ASSISTANT MAJOR - 39 semester hours

The major grade point average must be at least 2.50 and a grade of C or better must be earned in each course.		Hours complete	Hours required	Hours remaining
CD 119	Survey of Communication Disabilities **(Fall)**	_____	3	_____
CD 212	Anatomy & Physiology Basic to Communication & Learning **(Fall)**	_____	3	_____
CD 213	Speech and Language Development **(Fall)**	_____	3	_____
CD 225	Articulation Disorder and Management [Prereq. 119 & 213] **(Spring)**	_____	3	_____
CD 226	Language Disabilities [Prereq. 119 & 213] **(Spring)**	_____	3	_____
CD 229	Clinical Meth & Proced in Speech-Lang Path (Prereq: 119 & 213) **(Spring)**	_____	3	_____
CD 297	Practicum I – Observation (Prereq: 119 & 213) **(Fall)**	_____	5	_____
CD 298	Practicum II – Occupational Experience (Prereq: 225,226,229,297) **(Spring)**	_____	5	_____
CD 299	Practicum III – Continued Occupational Experience (Prereq: 298) **(Spring)**	_____	5	_____
CD 323	Intro to Rhythm: Voice & Neuro. Disorder [Prereq: 212] **(Fall)**	_____	3	_____
CD 324	Speech & Language for the Hearing Impaired [Prereq: 213] **(Fall)**	_____	3	_____
Major GPA _____	**Total major hours**	_____	39	_____

ELECTIVES: [Hours needed to reach 63 total hours]

	Elective Hours completed	_____	_____
MINIMUM 63 HOURS REQUIRED	_____	63	_____

Once the on-campus practicum was completed, our thoughts turn to the integration of the SLPA students into the off-campus practicum sites. The graph of time in therapeutic and support services and the listing of week by week suggested task assignments are guidelines to facilitate appropriate experiences for the SLPA in training. Although all the interactions of the SLPA practicum development team, the input from the community advisory team, and the literature read impacted the development of these materials, special note must be given to the short course presentation by Hagler and McFarlane at the 1998 ASHA Convention in for stimulating and directing our thinking in this direction.

Transition of the SLPA into the SLP Caseload

By Amanda Solesky & Dawnda Nichols

The initiation of the clinical practicum is an exciting time for the SLPA student, however, it can also be a time of anxiety over what is to come. Questions students typically have are:

"Will I get any therapy time?"
"Will I have all clerical tasks?"
"Will I start with clients on the first day?"
"How much real client contact will I have?"

These are understandable and valid concerns of the students. However, the site supervisors often have concerns as well:

"What do I need to do with this student on the first day?"
"How do I fold the student into my caseload?"
"How much observation do I give?"
"Are they ready to do therapy?"

Due to the above concerns on the part of the students and supervisors, a graph and schedule were developed to provide guidelines for how to transition the SLPA into the caseload. Students need to know not only what to expect, but what is expected of them during the practicum experience. By having a schedule, the supervisor is able to better plan and organize the student's experience.

The graph Suggested Transition of the SLPA into the SLP Caseload was developed in order to provide a visual representation of the assignment of therapeutic and supportive services. The term "Therapeutic Services" was chosen to denote those services the SLPA provides requiring interaction with the client via screening, assisting with assessment, assisting with treatment, and/or providing treatment. In other words, the SLPA is working with the client on a direct level. The term "Supportive Services" was chosen to denote those services the SLPA performs that may be associated with client management, not involving direct client contact. For example, developing graphs for data, scheduling, or gathering materials for the treatment session.

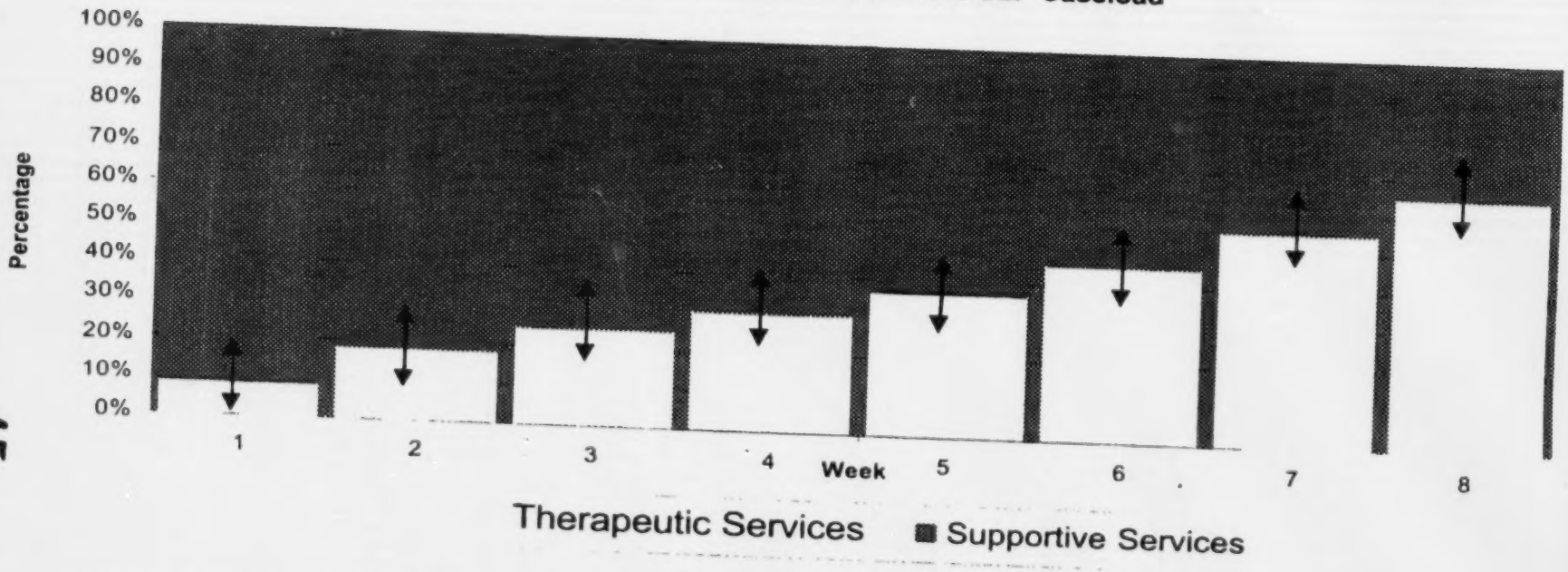
The graph depicts an eight-week clinical practicum period, and percentage of the workday the SLPA would be providing either therapeutic or supportive services. Starting at week one, the graph shows the SLPA student providing therapeutic services at 0% to 10%, and supportive services at 100% to 90% of the day (the range would vary based upon the setting, caseload, SLPA's experience, and the SLP's supervision style). By week eight the graph depicts the SLPA student providing therapeutic services at approximately 65% and supportive services at 35% of the day. The weeks in between show a gradual transition to more therapeutic duties and less supportive duties. The graph should be viewed as a guide because the actual amount of therapeutic and supportive services will vary dependent upon needs, caseload, and setting.

Along with the graph, a schedule titled "Example for Supervision and Phasing SLPA into Caseload" was developed to help students and supervisors understand what was expected. This schedule is based on an eight- week practicum period. For each week, suggestions are given regarding the number of clients assigned to the SLPA, how much supervision the SLP should provide, amount of written feedback the SLP should provide, times of contact from university supervisor, and when evaluations of the students' performance should be completed. This schedule is a suggestion and can be modified to accommodate the needs of individual students, supervisors, and facilities.

References

Hagler, P. & McFarlane, L. (1998, November). *A field tested model for supervision of support personnel.* Short course presented at 1998 Annual Convention of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, San Antonio, Texas.

Suggested Transition of the SLPA into the SLP Caseload



Therapeutic Patient/Student Services=SLPA interacts with patient/student via screening, assisting with assessment, assisting with treatment, &/or providing treatment

Supportive Patient/Student Services=SLPA performs tasks assigned by the SLP which may be associated with but does not include providing direct patient/student treatment

↕ =Amount of therapeutic services and support services may vary based on setting, caseload, and supervisory style

Refer to the "Example for Supervision and Phasing SLPA into Caseload"

Example for Supervision and Phasing SLPA into Caseload

Based on 8 week practicum experience

Week 1

- SLPA will complete orientation to facility, personnel, materials, and caseload.
- SLPA will observe SLP in therapy sessions.
- SLPA will assist SLP with some supportive tasks.
- SLPA will present summary of clinical experience to SLP.

Week 2

- SLPA will begin providing therapy to a small number of patients/students they have observed SLP with previously.
- More supportive tasks can be assigned/completed by SLPA.
- SLP's direct/indirect supervision/observation equals 80%.
- By end of week, SLP begins providing written observation checklists on therapy sessions.
- Telephone contact to SLPA student and SLP from ISU supervisor.

Week 3

- SLPA assigned to provide therapy to additional clients as SLP feels appropriate.
- SLPA continues to complete supportive tasks.
- SLP direct/indirect supervision/observation equals 70%, continue to provide written observation checklists on therapy sessions.

Week 4

- SLPA assigned to provide therapy to additional clients as SLP feels is appropriate.
- SLPA continues to complete assigned supportive tasks.
- SLP direct/indirect supervision/observation equals 60%, with periodic written observation checklists.
- SLP completes midterm evaluation of SLPA, discusses with student.
- On-site visit from ISU supervisor.

Week 5

- SLPA providing therapy to all clients that will be assigned per facility needs.
- SLPA completes assigned supportive tasks remainder of time.
- SLP direct/indirect supervision/observation equals 50% with periodic written observation checklists.

Week 6

- SLPA continues to provide treatment to assigned clients.
- SLPA completes supportive tasks.
- SLP direct/indirect supervision/observation of therapy sessions equals 40%, with periodic written observation checklists.

Week 7

- SLPA continues to provide treatment to assigned clients.
- SLPA completes any supportive tasks assigned by SLP.
- SLP direct/indirect supervision/observation equals 30%, with periodic written observation checklists.
- Telephone contact to SLPA and SLP from ISU supervisor.

Week 8

- SLPA continues to provide treatment to assigned clients.
- SLPA completes any supportive tasks by end of week.
- SLPA and supervisor complete summary of clinical experience.
- SLPA completes supervisor evaluation form.
- SLPA returns for discussion meeting at ISU one afternoon.
- SLPA returns evaluations, clinical summaries, hour verifications, etc. to ISU.
- SLP direct/indirect supervision/observation equals 30%, with periodic written feedback.
- SLP completes final evaluation of SLPA, discusses with student.

In an attempt to gain insight and to document the perspectives of our students, the program interviewed students shortly before they graduated. The information that they provide confirmed that our program was on the right track. We share interview excerpts at this point in this monograph so that others can get a sense of where some SLPA students have been, what they have been through, where they are going, and their reactions to it all. We are as justifiably proud of our students as they are of themselves.

Student Perspectives on the SLPA Program

By Kathryn D. Bayer, Janice Hopp, and Connie Miller

Kathryn D. Bayer

Why did you decide to enter the SLPA program?

My decision to apply to the SLPA program was influenced by two factors: timing and personal experience with a family member with a language disorder. When the article *(describing the program)* appeared in the *(local)* paper, I had just moved to Terre Haute and was considering returning to school to get my Masters in Geology, or take the education courses necessary to teach science in the public schools. I had substitute taught for three years previously in Alaska as well as home educated my own children for the past eighteen years. My daughter had been diagnosed as language delayed with central auditory processing problems many years before, and consequently, I was drawn to the field naturally as any concerned parent would be and also because I was her sole teacher.

What do you plan to do after graduation?

After graduation, my ideal employment situation would be to work with language disordered or autistic children (I think). Ask me again in a year!

Janice Hopp

Why did you decide to become an SLPA?

Two summers ago, I was employed by a local long-term care facility. I met and became friends with the SLP who worked there. I was fascinated by her work with the residents who had swallowing difficulties and also the ones who had cognitive impairments. When I saw the article in the newspaper about the new SLPA program at ISU, I knew it was an opportunity I couldn't pass up.

What do you plan to do after graduation?

After graduation I hope to find a job in the field locally. My first choice would be to work with a SLP in a long-term care facility or rehabilitation center of some kind. I'm most interested in the impairments that accompany strokes. If this isn't possible, I'll try to gain employment in a school district close to home.

Connie Miller

Why did you decide to enter the SLPA program?

I was enrolled at ISU completing a business degree I initiated 27 years earlier. I had returned to do something for myself after raising my family and working in several family businesses. As a nontraditional student, the courses were challenging and functional for a degree in finance, but there wasn't any passion for the material. I read an article in the Terre Haute paper about the new SLPA program being offered at ISU and it sparked my interest in the field. The article made me recall a positive experience with the school SLP, who had treated my son for vocal abuse, which had caused vocal nodules. The strategies used avoided surgery and improved his vocal quality. I researched the ISU web site, made some phone calls, and changed my major to the SLPA program.

What do you plan to do after graduation?

I originally planned to limit my job research to the school system, but my feelings have recently changed. I am currently doing my practicum in a nursing home, and much to my surprise, find it very satisfying and interesting. I will be moving to Arizona after graduation, since my husband recently accepted a job in the city of Prescott. 2002 will be the beginning of many new adventures, a new career and a new place to call home. I was born and have lived in Terre Haute all my life, so this will be a big change in my life.

The SLPA program was marketed as a jigsaw puzzle looking for the missing pieces. The pieces are coming together as I finish courses necessary to complete the degree. The program and my success have been built piece by piece and the finished product is a graduate with an Associate Degree as a SLPA. I am enthusiastic and looking forward to working in this field of study.

We at Indiana State University have spent the last four years climbing to a point that we thought was the top of a mountain only to come to realize that what we have actually been doing is climbing to a plateau that affords an opportunity to reflect back on the product and process of the last four years, as well as providing a view of challenges that appear on the distant horizon (future). We have identified some of these challenges for the specific purpose of speculating on the future.

On the Horizon: What We See in the Future

By Georgia Hambrecht and Mark Stimley

Job Availability: Now that we have trained several students to become SLPAs and have seen them working in their off-campus practicum sites so well, we see clearly a future in which SLPAs will play an increased role in delivering services to individuals with communication disorders. Now that we have seen how well the SLPs who have agreed to work with student SLPAs adapt to working with paraprofessionals and how much they appreciate the type of help that SLPAs can provide, we see a profession that will be very likely to ask for SLPAs as a way of extending the services that they offer while releasing themselves from some of the more routine parts of the position. All of this bodes well for future job availability, and acceptance of the SLPAs of the future.

Here to Stay: ASHA's continued support of SLPAs will be critical if SLPAs are going to become as widespread as the profession originally envisioned. If ASHA sticks with the original course that it set when it started defining the roles of support personnel in the profession, the job market for SLPAs should grow significantly over the next decade. Because of ASHA's training program accreditation and SLPA registration initiatives, acknowledgment and support of SLPAs will continue to grow. Despite financial constraints associated with the economy and the decrease in the number of SLPs that are graduating from programs, the needs of individuals with communication disorders will be able to be met by teams of trained professionals and paraprofessionals working together. We believe that someday ASHA will be commended for the proactive stance that it took on this issue before the need for SLPAs became so obvious.

Joint SLP-SLPA Training: Training programs will continue to look different as they address the guidelines ASHA has provided. We have a clear bias in favor of training SLPAs and SLPs together within the same program. Part of the difficulty interdisciplinary teams have had in interacting effectively stems from the segregation of their training. Teaching the roles and responsibilities of SLPAs and SLPs side-by-side, as well as promoting role appropriate interaction in clinical practicums, helps establish appropriate patterns of interaction for all involved. To further facilitate these patterns of behaviors, we believe programs will increase the supervision aspect of the SLP training, both in course work and in practicum experiences, so SLPs will be better prepared to assume the responsibilities of associated with the use of SLPAs.

SLPA's Place in the ASHA Organization: This is a critical issue. ASHA must resolve the dilemma of wanting to regulate SLPAs yet not wanting to embrace SLPAs as constituents with some voice within ASHA governance. We believe ultimately ASHA will find a compromise position that will allow for SLPAs to be valued participants within ASHA. Perhaps a compromise position will take the form of SLPA membership in an auxiliary organization of ASHA. Advanced training and continuing education needs for SLPAs may lead ASHA to establish courses and workshop opportunities for individuals in SLPA positions, perhaps accessible primarily through a distance education format.

Anticipated Modification to SLPA Guidelines: "Best practice" will result in a re-examination of the guidelines regarding SLPA scope of practice once sufficient time has elapsed and sufficient individuals have become practicing SLPAs. Guideline modifications will likely include 1) increased clarification of scope of practice of SLPAs to include working with some aspect of currently "out of bounds" disorders such as dysphagia and fluency 2) increased openness to the SLPA as a first rung on a career ladder into the profession, and 3) increased emphasis on making the SLP-SLPA service provider combination more efficient and cost effective.

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